

Exploring the Polarized Dialogue Surrounding Syrian Refugee Resettlement in the United States in Response to Executive Order 13769

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Background

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS -- One of the worst refugee crises of our time

- Syrians are trapped between conflict (Kurzgesagt, 2015)
- Since 2011, over 4.8 million people fled from Syria and over 6.6 million people displaced within Syria (“About this website,” 2016)
- No end in sight, so vulnerable refugees will continue to leave Syria (Thrall, 2015)
- Searching for ways to recreate their lives in order to provide the best future for their children and loved ones (PBS, 2016)
- Long to be resettled to a permanent location but many countries are reluctant to accept Syrian refugees. These refugees are primary victims of ISIS-inflicted violence, yet many countries fear that ISIS is disguising as Syrian refugees to get into Western countries (U.S. Committee, 2015)
- The United States has been accepting a limited number of Syrian refugees for resettlement, accepting 10,000 in the 2016 fiscal year, despite hundreds of thousands Syrian refugees that were referred to the country through the United Nations vetting process that year

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13769 -- President Trump signed January 27, 2017

- Executive Order on immigration with the goal of “protecting the nation from foreign terrorist entry” (NPR, 2017)
- Citizens from majority- Muslim nations of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen restricted from entering the United States for three months (Spangler, 2017)
- Stopped refugee resettlement into the United States for four months and banned refugee resettlement from Syria indefinitely (Spangler, 2017)

Study Purposes

- Explore the immediate public responses to Executive Order 13769 from both ‘sides’ of the issue
- Examine the facts that each side presents in response to the Order, the buzzwords people use, general attitudes presented about the Order, and underlying values driving people to either support or oppose the Order
- Understand factors motivating other side of the issue: Why are some so insistent on welcoming Syrians while others want to completely close our borders?
- Enter into a dialogue with people across the aisle

"What values drive people living in the United States to either welcome or oppose more Syrian refugees to be resettled here than current policy allows for?"

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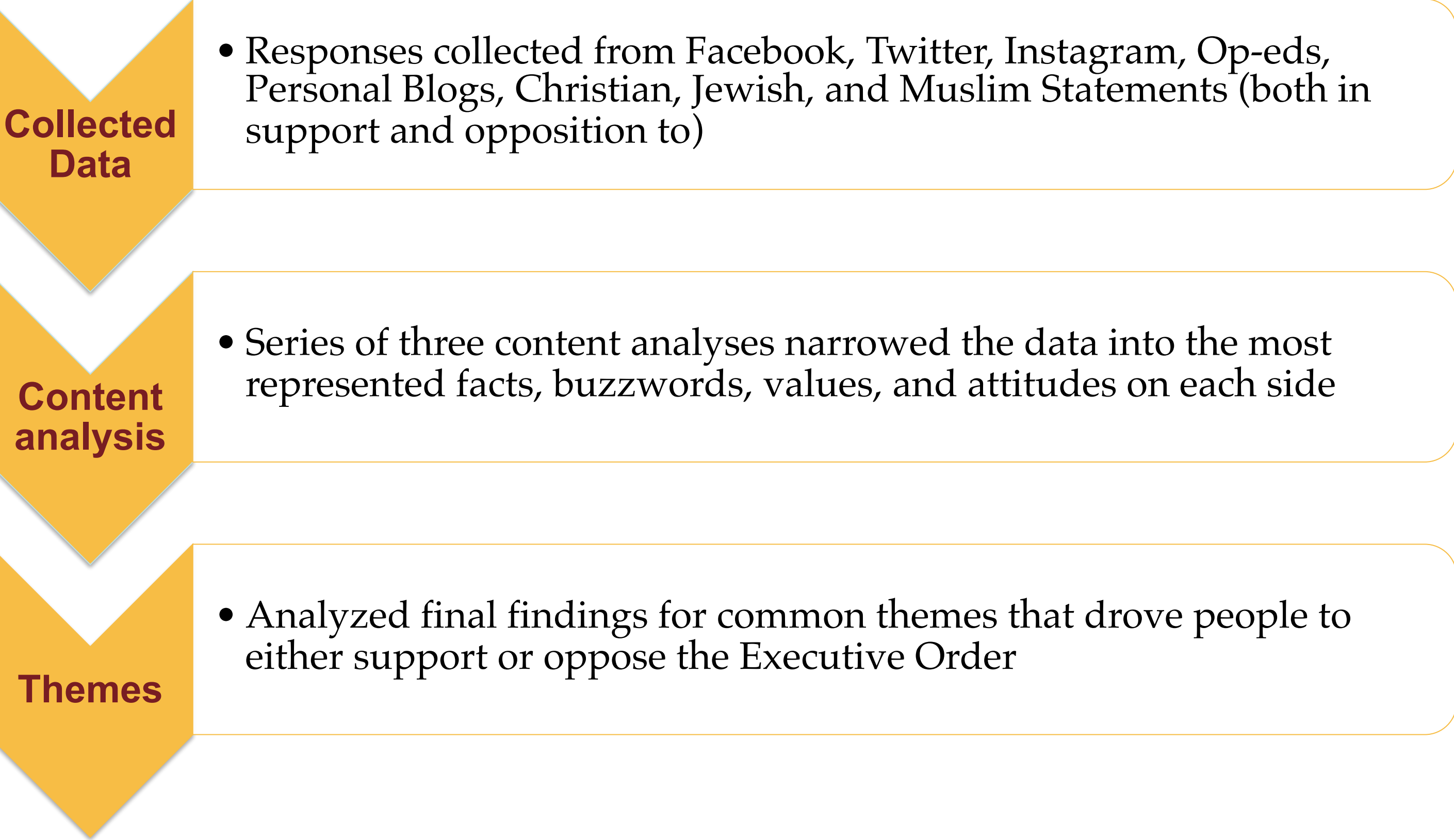
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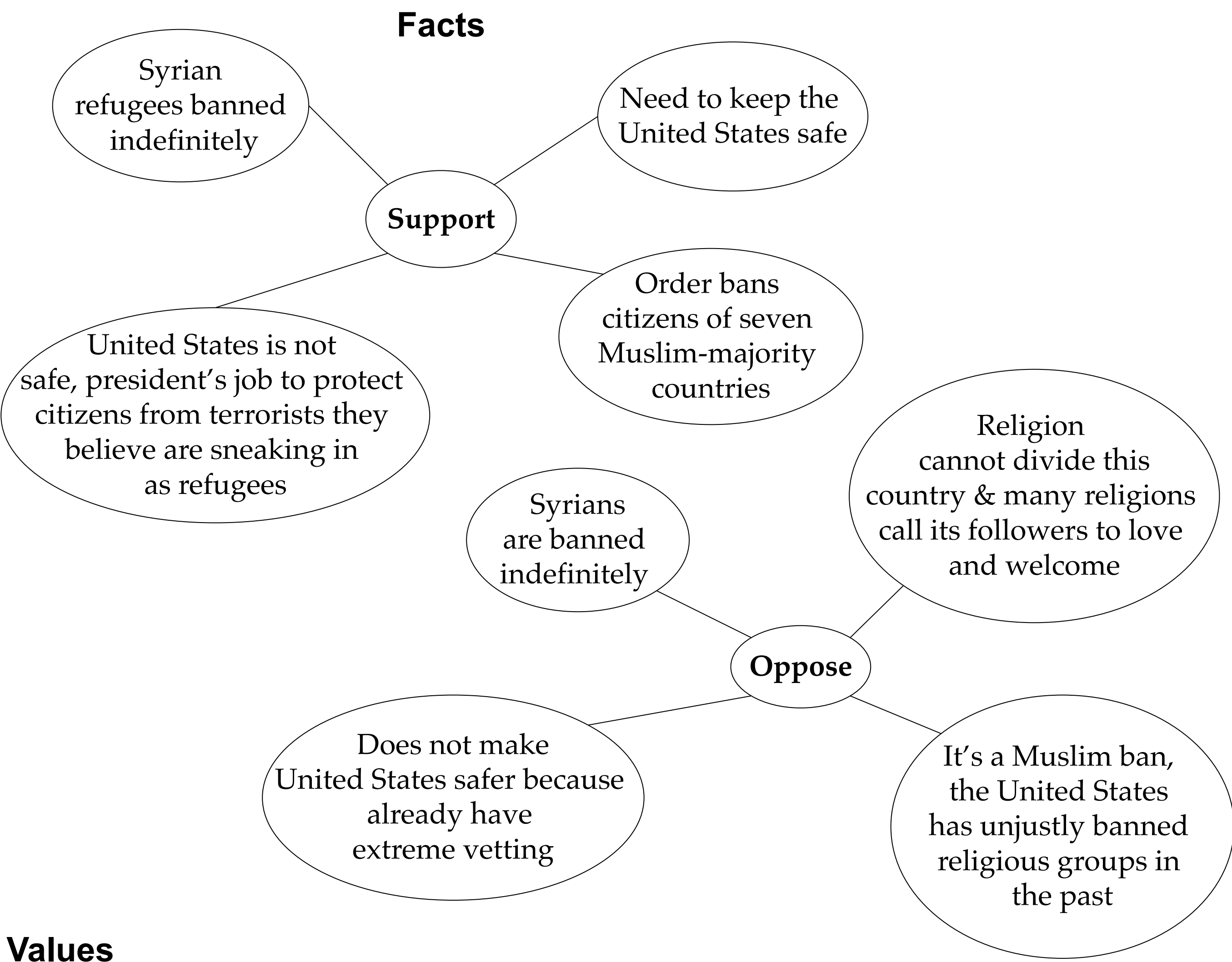
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Methods



Findings



Values

Support EO: Exclusivity, protection, America, and security

Oppose EO: Justice, safety, humanitarianism, and inclusivity.

Attitudes

Support of Executive Order have overall attitude that Americans are worthy of protection, so this Order is great.

Opposition to Executive Order have overall attitude that this ban goes against American values, so the people of the country should stand up and fight against Executive Order in order to welcome people from these countries.

Example Responses

Oppose Executive Order

"...our diversity is what makes our nation strong and prosperous. We teach our children to be inclusive, not to bully, and to treat other people as they would like to be treated. The right for all people in our country, no matter their background, to live, love and worship as they will, is enshrined in our Constitution—and is why America has long prospered... President Trump's executive order today that bans refugees and creates a de-facto religious test for new immigrants is both cruel and un-American. This heartless, Islamophobic act is not based on security concerns -- there is already a comprehensive screening process in place -- but rather is rooted in fear and prejudice. It is antithetical to our nation's values" (Rowe-Finkbeiner, 2017).

Support Executive Order

"...Executive Order carries out the first obligation of the President of the United States -- to protect the safety of the American public. The draft Executive Order addresses the dangerous flaws with the U.S. vetting and immigration system that have enabled foreign terrorists to perpetrate fatal terrorist attacks on American soil, including 9-11, and the Boston Marathon and San Bernadino massacres" (Klein, 2017).

Opposition



Support



Conclusion

How does this research help us in our polarized nation?

Both ‘sides’ have genuine concerns about human lives, so it is crucial to understand the values that someone else might hold that are beneath immediate responses and outspoken comments. Although both ‘sides’ value human lives, it is not an excuse to remain uninformed about the facts of the Syrian refugee crisis and the vetting process into the United States. Given that this Executive Order was revoked, as was its revision, the conversation surrounding national security and accepting Syrian refugees will be ongoing. This dialogue will not be over anytime soon, so it is important to understand multiple perspectives, as is the goal of this study, in order to move forward with the truth.